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evidence for them, contained in the last number of the "Dublin Review."

"The question of the Deutero-canonical books was investigated with the utmost care at the Council of Trent. Both early and late Councils were referred to in favour of the existing Catholic canon, together with the writings of SS. Cyprian, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Basil, and other fathers. The Protestants had claimed certain of the fathers as on their side; the Catholics answered, that when they wrote, the matter had not been fully investigated or decided on by the Church. The Protestants had asserted that the books in question had formed no part of the Hebrew canon; the Catholics maintained that they had been received with the utmost reverence by the Hellenistic Jews, and that the earliest Christian writers and martyrs, as Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, and Irenaeus, refer to them in the same manner as to other parts of Scripture. They quoted St. Augustine:—'We must not omit those books which we know to have been written before the coming of Christ, and which are received by the Church of the Saviour himself, although they be not received of the Jews.' Now, assuredly, the Church, notwithstanding her conviction of her own infallibility, used all those human means for arriving at the truth which God accords to us as a secondary instrumentality. Neither did she stand alone in her judgment. The East has confirmed the decision of the West; and, in 1672, a Greek Synod, held at Jerusalem, under the Patriarch Dositheus, acknowledged, as canonical, the same books to which the Council of Trent had already attached that character."—*Dublin Review*, xxxv. 307, January, 1854.

I shall only add, that when you assert that several writers, for the first 300 years, did not consider those books inspired, you appear to me to prove what learned Roman Catholics do not deny. Witness the sentence in the above which I have marked in italics. Dr. Milner says ("End of Controversy," letter ix.):—"It was not until the end of the fourth century, that the genuine canon of Holy Scripture was fixed, and then it was fixed by the tradition and authority of the Church, declared in the third Council of Carthage, and a decretal of Pope Innocent I." Again, Mr. Newman says ("Essay on Development," p. 160):—"On what ground do we receive the canon, as it comes to us, but on the authority of the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries? The Church of that era decided—not merely bore testimony, but passed a judgment on former testimony—that certain books were of authority." Does it not appear then, sir, that we have got an answer to your question—"If there was no perfect Bible in the first 300 years, how did the Church of Rome come by it in later times?" Answer—By the authority of the Council of Carthage, and the decretal of Pope Innocent I.

I am, sir,

A SUBSCRIBER.

Our correspondent appears to have taken this account from a great authority, the "Dublin Review," which is known to be under the direction of Cardinal Wiseman. It seems to us fairly to admit that the Church for 400 years did not believe the Apocrypha to be inspired. This is just what we said ourselves; and is this all the answer we are to get? Either the whole Church of Christ was wrong for 400 years about the Bible, or the Church of Rome is wrong about it now. Which is most likely?

FLOWERS FOR FEBRUARY.

SURLY winter has not yet departed, and the month of February, far from being all sunshine, has many an hour

"Of solemn gloom,
Ere yet the lovely spring assume
Sole empire; with the lingering cold
Content divided sway to hold."

Under this bare and chilly aspect appears the SNOWDROP, winter's timid child, with its solitary flowers drooping gracefully over its parent breast of drifted snow.

Its botanical name is "*Galanthus nivalis*" (milk-flower of the snow). The French call it *Pierce-nieve*, or snow piercer. The monks called it our "Lady of February." Whether it be a natural wild flower of the British Islands has been doubted. Mackay's *Flora Hibernica* says it is scarcely indigenous in Ireland. It is certainly to be found in the woods and meadows of England now; but had it been a wild flower in the days of Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, it is passing strange that its chaste and simple beauties should have found no place in their groups of wild flowers—with the primroses and daffodils. They make the primrose the first flower of spring; whereas we all recognise the modest little Snowdrop, as "the morning star of flowers"—the first visitant that greets us as chilly winter is retiring at the approach of genial spring. While yet the surface of the earth is covered with snow,

"We behold the snowdrop white
Start to light,
And shine in Flora's desert bower."

The Snowdrop thus appearing, under the changeful sky of early spring, is "an emblem of human life, and frail as fair." Its life among us is short, and transient, and very

"The night breeze tears its silken dress,
Whilst decked with silvery lustre, shone;
The morn returns not it to bless;
The gaudy crocus flatters its pride,
And triumphs where its rival died."

But still, even in its short passage through life, it reads lesson. It appears to arise from its bed of snow to

tell us, that while winter, in the economy of nature, has its own especial office, and its gloom and its cold are the necessary preparations for the spring time and summer, and though the songs of birds are mute, and the sun is clouded with dark and frowning clouds, and the hoar frost spreads its mantle all around, the spring is coming, and, like hope, it points to a season more bright than the present.

"So piety, upheld by faith and hope,
Endures serene by the passing storm of life,
With eye intent on heaven,
And thought already there."

Long since has the Snowdrop been regarded as the emblem of *Consolation*. What is its anti-type with us? Is it the consolation for which that just and devout man, Simeon, was looking, which, when he had seen, he exclaimed, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, because mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (St. Luke, xi. 25, 26). This was none other than "*the Christ of the Lord*." He was emphatically called the *Consolation of Israel*. So was he the consolation of the early Christian Church, in the apostolic days, for St. Paul says, "So our consolation abounded by Christ" (2 Cor. i. 5); and, as a most solemn appeal to the Philippian Church, he writes, "If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ." In vain do we search the Old and New Testament Scriptures for any allusion to the consolation presented to her people by the Church of Rome, the Virgin Mary, and the saints in life, and purgatory and masses in death. And how should we expect to find such? If St. Paul be right, our consolation abounds in Christ; and again he declares that God in his mercy hath vouchsafed to make solemn oath, "that we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to take hold upon the hope that was set before us" (Heb. vi. 18); this hope being "*Jesus Christ, who is our hope*" (1 Tim. i. 1). "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27).

The first rival of the Snowdrop, is the gaudy Crocus, so called by the Greeks, from the saffron colour of one of its species. The French, for the same reason, call it "saffron printanier." Mackay says, that if not indigenous in Ireland, it has been naturalized in our meadows, and grows plentifully in many parts of Ireland, especially about Dungantown. Gerarde, perhaps, is more accurate when he states, that "this pleasant plant that brought forth yellow flowers" was first introduced into these islands in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It has since spread over the meadows of many parts of England, and near Nottingham and the silvery Trent whole acres are to be seen covered with its rich mantle of bright purple. The Crocus is certainly a native of the middle and southern parts of Europe and the Levant; and in our rambles through the mountains and valleys of Switzerland we may meet with fields of the wild purple autumnal crocus, almost within the precincts of the eternal snows. The mountain pass from Martigny to Chamouni, by the Col de Balme, about midway up, presents one of the most luxuriant fields in the world of Crocus, in company with wild anemones, violets, and harebells. We raised the bulbs and transplanted them to an Irish soil; but, alas! they withered and died. The Crocus generally, when taken up, appears dry and shrivelled, as if it could never again put forth its rich flowers and green leaves, but yet, at the approach of spring, it awakens to life. So it is with the Christian: his life is hid—all may seem dark and dead, but there arises light out of darkness; the spirit of joy replaces the spirit of heaviness, and the plant of peace is watered with the dew of heaven.

The pretty little *Hepatica triloba*, now also appears in our borders, opening its flowers somewhat later than the Snowdrop and Crocus; it derived its name from the lobe, or liver (*hepar*) shape of its leaves. Formerly it was called Noble Liver-wort, and Herb-Trinity. It is indigenous to most parts of Europe, though not, perhaps, to the British Isles; but still with us it has long been a familiar favourite. In the Canadas it is called the Snow Flower, as it is the first flower of a Canadian spring. It has many varieties, of all kinds of colour, and through all the shades of blue and red, from pearl colour to the deep azure of the sky, and from rose colour and peach blossom to purple; and after its flowers are gone, its ivy-shaped leaves are an enduring ornament through the open months of the year.

The Hepatica is a peculiar flower, and somewhat of an oddity in its habits. Gardeners say that if it be removed from its parent bed on which it has been grown from seed, it languishes and changes this bright native colour into a sickly hue, which it never recovers until restored to its former situation.

Its appearance has long been regarded as an unerring indication of the temperature of the earth, showing when seed time has arrived; and, therefore, it cannot be wondered at, that the return of this lovely little flower to our parterre is always welcomed with gladness, as reassuring us of the innate vitality of vegetable life. Perhaps from this cause it has become the emblem of *Confidence*.

"The Hepaticas are blooming fair,
The hue of constancy they wear;
So bright their vestments blue,
That fancy deems the lovely dye
Was stolen from the azure sky,
And painted by the dew."

"Soon as the hope of spring is told,
Their blossoms in his path unfold,
The glowing sun to woe,
And prove the symbol true;
Thus humble Confidence is given
To the first promise of heaven."

But where is our confidence to be placed? In human nature, human merit, or human works? or in dead men, and women, canonized as saints? or in angels, or in the Virgin Mary, or the Apostle Paul, or the Apostle Peter? David tells us, "God is the confidence (or hope) of all the ends of the earth" (Psalm lxiv. 5—65th Psalm of authorised version). Solomon tells us, "The Lord shall be thy confidence" (Prov. iii. 26). The Prophet Micah tells us, "Put not confidence in a guide"—meaning a human guide—(Micah, vii. 5). St. Paul tells us, "Rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philipp. iii. 3). St. John tells us, "And now little children abide in him (Christ Jesus) that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1st Epistle St. John xi. 28). If this be true, all those who have placed their confidence in beads, or rosaries, or scapulars, or penances, or works, or angels, or saints, or purgatory, or any other thing than Christ Jesus, will be ashamed before him at his coming. May that not be the case, reader with you, nor with me.

FARM OPERATIONS FOR FEBRUARY.

(From the Irish Farmers' Gazette.)

EVERY preparation for the season's crops should be put into active operation this month; draining and subsoiling, and the first ploughing and digging, if not finished by the first of the month, should be brought to a close without delay.

Spring Wheat should be sown not later than the middle of the month; no time should be lost, therefore, in getting in the seed at every favourable opportunity. As the season advances, a little increase in the seed will be necessary, so as to prevent tillering, so that it may ripen early and evenly together. Thin sowing at this period will have the effect of promoting second growths at too late a period, and thereby an unevenly ripened sample. From 30 to 40 barrels of lime, or from 2 to 3 cwt. of guano, spread evenly and harrowed in along with the seed, should there be a doubt as to the land being sufficiently rich, will much assist in advancing the crop to maturity.

Beans should be sown early in the month, to make certain of a remunerating crop; they should invariably be sown in drills 2½ feet apart, to allow of being horse-hoed, and dibbled in at four inches beam from bean, but the drill-machine saves much labour and seed. Beans, when sown thin, grow short, and pod freely down to the ground; but if sown thick, they grow tall, do not pod well, and are late in ripening, from the want of sun and air. A strong loam is the best soil for beans, and if well manured they are a good preparation for wheat the next season, which is then found to grow to less straw, produce a good head, with a plump, well-matured grain. The Russian is now allowed to be the hardiest sort; but any of the following may be relied on for a good crop—Tic, Heligoland, and Egyptian, for cattle; and the early Mazagan, long-pod, or Windsor, for human consumption. Quantity of seed per Irish acre, 8½ bushels, sown broadcast, or 2 bushels drilled.

Peas for an early crop may be sown now. The same culture as that recommended for beans is applicable to peas; but the land suited to them should be lighter and drier than that in which beans may be sown; they will give good crops on all stubble land that is not too much exhausted; but if they can be afforded a little manure, it will amply remunerate for its application. The kinds best adapted for cattle-feeding are—large gray, early gray, partridge, and Pennsylvanian; for human consumption, early Charleton, double-blossomed May, or Prussian blue pea.

Oats.—Black oats may be sown about the 12th, but the white sorts are best deferred sowing till the end of this, or the beginning of the next month.

Potatoes.—Every dry opportunity should be taken advantage of to get this valuable crop planted, previous to their wasting their strength in pushing out their shoots. The early-ripening sorts should be chosen for this purpose, amongst the best of which are the early Bangors, ash-leaved kidneys, Kemps, pretty Betties, and purple kidneys.

Parsnips may be sown any time this month, in a deepened and properly-pulverised soil, well manured with well-decomposed manure, or rich compost, which should be well and deeply incorporated with the soil. They should be sown in drills 2½ inches apart, and the plants afterwards singled out to 8 inches plant from plant; sown now they will come in early, but the general crop need not be sown till the first or second week in March; but a dry seed-time should not be passed over if it occurs a week or ten days before that period. The common and the Jersey hollow-crowned, are the most usually sown: but there is a variety particularly adapted to shallow soils, called the turnip-rooted; from 4 to 5 lbs. will sow the Irish acre, if the seed be good.

Odds and ends.—Keep a sharp look out after the mouths of the under drains, and clear away all stoppages, and cause all defects to be immediately remedied or repaired. Keep adding to the manure-heaps, prepare and cart dry earth for fresh composts, to make a base and coverings for the sides of the farm-yard manures, and turn over old ones. See that the store stock in the yards and sheds are abundantly supplied with fresh-threshed straw and turnips. Continue to scour out drains and ditches where practicable; repair hedges and plant new ones.